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Warm Goat Cheese Salad with Grainy Mustard Vinaigrette

When I lived in Paris, this was my favorite lunchtime treat. For a nuttier version, substitute ground walnuts for the breadcrumbs. Makes 4 dinner salads.

Salad:

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 large egg
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
1-1/2 cups plain breadcrumbs
1 log (10.5 ounces) fresh goat cheese, chilled in the refrigerator
1 bag (10 ounces) European blend

Position an oven rack to the highest setting. Preheat the oven to 395°F. Brush a baking sheet with the oil; set aside.

In a small bowl, whisk the egg with a pinch of salt and pepper. In another small bowl, place the bread crumbs. Slice the goat cheese log into 8 equal pieces. Working in batches, dip the goat cheese rounds in the egg mixture, shaking off the excess. Press into the breadcrumb mixture and pat gently to evenly coat. Arrange on the prepared baking sheet.

Place the baking sheet on the top rack of the oven and bake the goat cheese rounds until crisp and golden, about 5 minutes.

Place the European Blend in a large salad bowl. Add the vinaigrette to taste and gently toss. Divide the salad among individual plates. Top each salad with 2 warm goat cheese rounds. Serve immediately.

Grainy Mustard Vinaigrette

2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
1 tablespoon whole-grain Dijon mustard
6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper

Combine the vinegar and mustard in a small bowl and whisk together. Slowly add the oil in a stream, whisking to emulsify. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Makes about 1/2 cup.

Tip: Every oven is a little different. Gas ovens cook faster than electric. If you are not familiar with your oven, please watch closely to ensure even browning.